United Nations

Daily Highlights

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* Secretary-General arrives in Beijing and meets with Chinese Vice-Premier; signs Host-Country Agreement for 1995 Women's Conference.

* Secretary-General welcomes Burundi power-sharing Convention; says international community will not accept undemocratic solution of country's political problems.

* Special Representative for Rwanda holds constructive talks on refugee issues with President of Zaire; UNAMIR estimates number of displaced persons in Rwanda at two million.

* International Conference on Former Yugoslavia to establish border inspection mission in Federal Republic of Yugoslavia; will ensure that only humanitarian aid enters Bosnia and Herzegovina.

* Forty-three UNOMIL observers continue to be detained in Liberia; six NGO staff reportedly released.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today began an official visit to the People's Republic of China, where he was joined by Under-Secretary-General Ji. He had a meeting with Vice-Premier and Foreign Minister Qian Qichen and discussed a range of issues, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Tajikistan and Iraq. He also raised the question of next January's Security Council Summit, and the need to reassess peace-keeping operations. At a formal ceremony later in the day, the Secretary-General and the Vice-Premier signed the Host-Country Agreement for the 1995 Women's Conference in Beijing.

The Secretary-General later met with the Foreign Minister of Honduras, who invited him to attend a summit meeting of Central American leaders on peace and development in Tegucigalpa next month. The Secretary-General said that he was unlikely to be able to attend the summit, but that he would send an envoy.

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For information media--not an official record

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has welcomed the signing on 9 September of a Convention of Government on power-sharing by political parties in Burundi. Stressing the importance of peace and stability in that country, he encouraged political leaders who had not yet signed the Convention to do so as soon as possible.

The Secretary-General said only dialogue and compromise could produce a political settlement leading to a lasting peace. Any solution imposed by violence and against democratic principles would not be acceptable to the international community. He expressed the hope that Burundi would soon elect a President and establish a Government, thus facilitating international assistance for rehabilitation, recovery and development.

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Special Representative Shahryar Khan has held very constructive meetings with President Mobutu of Zaire, during which they discussed problems relating to Rwandan refugee camps, a United Nations spokesman said today. The President agreed that former Rwandan soldiers should be moved from border camps to sites 150 to 250 kilometres away. He asked Mr. Khan to assemble a team of United Nations representatives to assess the suitability of six sites which had been identified by the Zairean authorities.

President Mobutu was also willing to allow United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) peace-keepers to cross the border to protect refugees who were being intimidated in the camps, the spokesman continued. He noted that Security Council authorization would be required for any expansion of the Mission's mandate.

The spokesman went on to say that the rainy season had started in the region, and that the refugees needed plastic sheeting for housing. The rains also led to rising malaria rates. Meanwhile, following a detailed analysis of the situation, the British UNAMIR contingent has estimated that there are more than 2 million internally displaced people in Rwanda. Previous estimates put the total at 800,000.

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The Civilian Counsellor of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, Bo Pellnas, today left Geneva for Belgrade to establish a border inspection mission in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). The mission will work with local customs officials and the Red Cross to ensure that only humanitarian aid crosses the border with Bosnia and Herzegovina. It will consist of 135 international staff, supported by a similar number of interpreters and drivers.

Meanwhile, a United Nations spokesman has expressed concern regarding a sharp increase in shelling around Mostar, and a resumption of sniper fire in Gorazde in breach of the anti-sniping agreement concluded earlier this year. Shelling continued today in the Bihac pocket, although the number of detonations was down by half from the 900 reported yesterday.

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The Force Commander of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), General Bertrand de Lapresle, and Lieutenant-General Michal Rose would meet with the Military Committee of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Brussels tomorrow, the spokesman said.

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Forty-three military observers from the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) were still being detained in various parts of the country today, according to a spokesman for the Organization. He described their condition as extremely precarious. Meanwhile, there were unconfirmed reports that six non-governmental organization staff had been released by their captors.

Some of the detainees had been allowed to communicate with UNOMIL and some had had stolen property returned to them, the spokesman said. However, others had critically low food stocks and ten had not been heard from. All other military observers in Liberia had been ordered to return to Monrovia.

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